

February 19, 2017 7th Sunday

Love your enemies!

Lev 19:1-2,17-18

Psalms 103:1-4,8+10,12-13

1Corinthians 3:16-23

Matthew 5:38-48

Moses tells the people they are to be holy for the Lord is holy. Although it is permissible for them to reprove a brother they are not to take revenge and incur sin; they are to love neighbors as they love themselves.

The psalmist reminds the readers not to forget all the blessings they have received from the Lord who shows them love and compassion. The Lord is slow to anger and rich in mercy and his anger over our sins, when it comes, will abate over time; he has the same compassion for the faithful as a parent has for a child.

Paul emphasizes to the Corinthians that their corporate identity is the temple of God. For this reason, unity in the community is important, and anyone who disrupts this unity with false teachings will be punished. Those who consider themselves as exemplifying the wisdom of the world are simply foolish in the eyes of God.

In the Gospel Jesus tells his disciples to forego the usual instinctive method of retaliation and not repeat the actions of their enemies. The Father in heaven shares the benefits of the natural world with everyone, be they good or bad, and this serves as an example for the faithful. While it is only natural to love those who are friends and family, Jesus says love and concern must be extended and not limited if the perfection of God is to be imitated.

The Holy Spirit leads us to the Son who brings us to the Father.

Love

Moses reminds the Israelites to love their neighbors while Jesus extends the teaching to loving even enemies. Forget the old ways of retaliation in the face of evil and let good overcome it. Love and non-retaliation are what the people of God, the living temple, are to perfect and this makes for ideal unity in the Christian community. Unity according to Paul is what brings the community to a greater rapport.

Lord, you call me to love unconditionally but I am so weak in this virtue that I need to be strengthened by you. Send the Spirit of Truth to me often and may your words instruct me in your wisdom.

A wonderful thing is love; all of its ways are good; it lightens even heavy burdens and enables one to bear unfair treatment.

Jesus' teachings on love cannot be held back by worldly values and inspire us to higher ways that lead to perfection.

Nothing is higher than love, nothing is of more value because love is born of the perfect communion of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Love is equal of any task and will succeed in situations where those who do not love, fail.

Love does not concern itself with the difficulty of the task and considers all things are possible. *Love never fails* (1 Cor 13:8).

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